

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A system for determining overall capability of a trading partner, in a bidding system with which trading partners present their bidding prices via a network, in response to a ~~matter~~bid invitation presented by a buyer company, comprising:

a trading partner database for storing scores representing capabilities of the trading partners on a plurality of estimation items;

an element weight table containing weights of the capabilities of the trading partners for the plurality of estimation items for each of ~~plural matters~~ a plurality of bid invitations;

a database for said ~~matters~~bid invitations to be quoted by trading partners; and

a controller arranged

to determine bidding trading partners that show bidding prices;

to retrieve scores on the plurality of estimation items of the bidding trading partners, from the trading partner database;

to retrieve weights for the plurality of estimation items for the ~~matter~~bid invitation presented by the buyer company, from the element weight table;

to multiply a score on each of the estimation items by a weight for the estimation item for the ~~matter~~bid invitation presented by the buyer to calculate a weighted score on each of the estimation items for the ~~matter~~bid invitation for each of the bidding trading partners;

to sum weighted scores of the estimation items to calculate a weighted overall score for the ~~matter~~bid invitation for each of the bidding trading partners; and

to select a trading partner to supply the ~~matter~~-bid invitation from the bidding trading partners based on the bidding prices and the weighted overall scores, the selected trading partner being one whose bidding price is not greater than a target price plus x% and who has the highest overall score of capabilities.

2. (Previously Presented) A system for determining overall capability of a trading partner, according to claim 1, wherein the scores representing capabilities of the trading partners stored in the trading partner database are scores representing capabilities of the trading partners on a plurality of estimation items, in numerical form, based on any of information on the trading partners, obtained from the trading partners, information concerning estimation of the trading partners, kept by the buyer company and business information concerning the trading partners, obtained from external credit-ranking agencies.

3-4. (Canceled)

5. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A system for determining overall capability of a trading partner, according to claim ~~[[3]]~~ 1, wherein the controller is further arranged to represent a difference between the bidding price and a target price predetermined for the ~~matter~~, bid invitation, in numerical form, to multiply the weighted data overall score represented in numerical form by the price difference represented in numerical form and to select trading partners in order of decreasing value of the data represented in numerical form, after the multiplication.

6. (Currently Amended) A system for determining overall capability of a trading partner, according to claim 1, wherein the controller is further arranged to choose a selecting routine from a plurality of predetermined selecting routines, according to an

article subjected to the bidding and to select a trading partner or trading partners for the ~~matter~~ bid invitation by executing the chosen selecting routine.

7. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A system for determining overall capability of a trading partner, according to claim 6, wherein the plurality of predetermined selecting routines include a selecting routine which functions to select the trading partner having the highest value of the weighted data overall score represented in numerical form.

8. (Currently Amended) A system for determining overall capability of a trading partner, according to claim 6, wherein the plurality of predetermined selecting routines include a selecting routine which functions to represent a difference between the bidding price and a target price predetermined for the ~~matter~~, bid invitation, in numerical form, to add the price difference represented in numerical form to the weighted data overall score represented in numerical form and to select trading partners in order of decreasing value of the data overall score represented in numerical form, after the addition.

9. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A system for determining overall capability of a trading partner, according to claim 6, wherein the plurality of predetermined selecting routines include a selecting routine which functions to represent a difference between the bidding price and a target price predetermined for the ~~matter~~, bid invitation, in numerical form, to multiply the weighted data overall score represented in numerical form by the price difference represented in numerical form and to select trading partners in order of decreasing value of the data overall score represented in numerical form, after the multiplication.

10. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A system for determining overall capability of a trading partner, according to claim 6, wherein the plurality of predetermined selecting routines include a selecting routine which functions to select the trading partner having presented the lowest bidding price among the trading partners having a score of the weighted data overall score represented in numerical form, higher than a predetermined one.

11. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A system for determining overall capability of a trading partner, according to claim 6, wherein the plurality of predetermined selecting routines include a selecting routine which functions to select the trading partner having the highest value of the weighted data overall score represented in numerical form provided that no trading partner has presented a bidding price equal to or greater than the target price.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for comprehensively determining a trading partner by a system comprising a trading partner database storing scores representing capabilities of trading partners, an element weight table containing weights of the capabilities of the trading partners for a plurality of estimation items for each of plural ~~matters~~ a plurality of bid invitations and a database for said ~~matters~~ bid invitations to be quoted by trading partners, and a controller, the method comprising the following steps performed by the controller,

receiving bidding prices from the trading partners;

determining bidding trading partners that show bidding prices;

retrieving scores on the plurality of estimation items of the bidding trading partners, from the trading partner database;

retrieving weights for the plurality of estimation items for the ~~matter~~-bid invitation presented by the buyer company, from the element weight table;

multiplying a score on each of the estimation items by a weight for the estimation item for the ~~matter~~-bid invitation presented by the buyer to calculate a weighted score on each of the estimation items for the ~~matter~~-bid invitation for each of the bidding trading partners;

summing weighted scores of the estimation items to calculate a weighted overall score for the ~~matter~~-bid invitation for each of the bidding trading partners; and

selecting a trading partner to supply the ~~matter~~-bid invitation from the bidding trading partners based on the bidding prices and the weighted overall scores, the selected trading partner being one whose bidding price is not greater than a target price plus x% and who has the highest overall score of capabilities.

13. (Previously Presented) A method for comprehensively determining a trading partner, according to claim 12, wherein the scores representing capabilities of the trading partners stored in the trading partner database are scores representing capabilities of the trading partners on a plurality of estimation items, in numerical form, based on any of information on the trading partners, obtained from the trading partners, information concerning estimation of the trading partners, kept by the buyer company and business information concerning the trading partners, obtained from external credit-ranking agencies.

14-15. (Canceled)

16. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A method for comprehensively determining a trading partner, according to claim ~~[[14]]~~ 12, further comprising the following steps performed by the controller:

representing a difference between the bidding price and a target price predetermined for the ~~matter~~, bid invitation, in numerical form;

multiplying the weighted data overall score represented in numerical form by the price difference represented in numerical form; and

selecting trading partners in order of decreasing value of the data overall score represented in numerical form, after the multiplication.

17. (Withdrawn-Currently Amended) A method for comprehensively determining a trading partner, according to claim 12, further comprising the following steps performed by the controller:

choosing a selecting routine from a plurality of predetermined selecting routines; and

selecting a trading partner or trading partners for the ~~matter~~ bid invitation by executing the chosen selecting routine.